Pillsbury Milling Complex,
Tile Elevator
Southeast Main Street between
Southeast Third and Fifth avenues
on City Block
Minneapolis
Hennepin County
Minnesota

HABS No. MN-29-5-E

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILOINGS SURVEY

PILLSBURY MILLING COMPLEX, TILE ELEVATOR — HABS No. MN-29-5E

Location: Southeast Main Street between Southeast Third and Fifth Avenue on City Block, Lot 18, Minneapolis, Hennepin County, Minnesota.

USGS Minneapolis South Quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: Zone 15; 480100:4981060; 480320:4980940; 480260:4980800; 480040:4980940

Present Owner: The Pillsbury Company
Pillsbury Center
200 South Sixth Street
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402

Present Occupant: The Pillsbury Company

Present Use: Grain Storage

Significance: The Pillsbury Tile Elevator is significant primarily in relationship to the Pillsbury Milling Complex. The Pillsbury "A" Mill was constructed in 1881 and was one of the first United States Mills to utilize a Hungarian milling process with rollers and not mill stones. As the complex expanded it retained the image of invention. Invention allowed it to become an international leader in flour output per day by 1882.

In 1889 Frank H. Peavey, an engineer, performed experiments on cylindrical masonry grain storage facilities. Mention of the Pillsbury Company by Peavey in relation to the construction of this type of storage facility would indicate that the tile elevator could be one of the first storage facilities of this type to be used commercially.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Oate of erection: 1910, confirmed by a historic photo of construction in progress received by the Minnesota Society, September 24, 1918 MH 5.9, written information in other MP3.1P background source P.45, material confirms this date.

2. Architect: None.

3. Original and subsequent owners: Pillsbury Flour Mills Company, now The Pillsbury Company.

4. Builder: Barnett and Record Co. Contract awarded October 1909.

5. Original Plans and Construction: Plans of the Tile Elevator are on file at The Pillsbury Company. The Tile Elevator was constructed with 25 tanks at a capacity of 430,000 bu. Space was left between the existing Pillsbury "A" Mill and the elevator for the later addition of a new milling unit and cleaning house. Historic photos during construction verify the date of erection and relatively unchanged physical appearance to this date.

6. Alterations and Additions:

In 1916, with the building of additional grain elevators in Block 50, Lots 5 - 9, two conveyor bridges were added to connect the two facilities. An unloading shed was also expanded at this time.

B. Historical Context:

The Tile Elevator was built in 1910 by the Pillsbury Flour Mills Company, formerly the C.A. Pillsbury and Company (1869-1889) and the Pillsbury Washburn Flour Mills Co., Ltd., (1889-1909). The C.A. Pillsbury began as a partnership between Charles A. Pillsbury (managing partner), John S. Pillsbury, George A. Pillsbury, and Fred C. Pillsbury. In 1889 the Company incorporated and brought in outside investors. Charles Pillsbury retained his management position but the company now operated as a corporation. Financial decline in 1908 forced refinancing and eventually the Company was bought out through receivership in 1909 by Albert C. Loring. With its new ownership organization, the financial problems began to be resolved and the company regained its prior image of revolutionary progress in the technology of the milling process. The Pillsbury Company presently has expanded into many different food and restaurant industries such as Green Giant Foods, Burger King Fast Foods and Bennigans Restaurants.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Character: The architectural character of the "A" Mill is noteworthy in its use of an architect and local stone. The tile elevator, however, is more a feat of engineering than one of architectural prominence.

2. Condition of Fabric: The condition of the structural tile work appears sound. No major cracking is evident.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall Dimensions: The structure is 160 feet square at the base. In height it is 185 feet from finished grade to the top. The first floor is comprised of the storage tanks which are 100 feet high. Floor heights in the head house are as follows: Second floor - 18'-0", third floor 16'-0", fourth floor 19'-0", fifth floor 16'-0", sixth floor 9'-9", and penthouse level 6'-5". A basement level is 15'-6" from the bottom of the first floor to the basement floor.

2. Foundation: 60" x 60" concrete caisson footings 7'-7" below basement floor slab.

3. Exterior Walls: Walls consist of a steel frame with 5"-4" tile exterior walls.

4. Structural System, Framing: Steel, octagonal concrete column 4'-0" x 4'-0" below storage tanks in basement.

5. Porches: N/A

6. Chimneys: N/A

7. Openings:

a. Doors: An entrance door is visible at the southeast corner to access the stair tower at the rear of the rail lines.

b. Windows: Fifty windows occur within the five story headhouse above the storage tanks. Windows are 2/2 double hung sash with fire shutters.

8. Roof:

a. Shape: Appears to be flat roof with various mechanical vents. A large neon sign is mounted on top bearing the Company's name.

b. Cornice: N/A

c. Dormers, Towers: N/A

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor Plans:

a. Plan consists of twenty-five cylindrical storage tanks, each thirty-two feet in diameter.

2. Stairways: Stair is located at the south elevation of the building and contains 18 landings.

3. Flooring: Basement floor 4" concrete slab with 1" concrete topping. Floors two through seven are steel frame with 1" cement tile and 1" cement topping.

4. Walls and Ceilings: Unknown.

5. Walls and Ceiling Finishes: Unknown.

6. Decorative Finishes: Unknown.

7. Lighting Fixtures: Unknown.

8. Heating: Unknown.

D. Site:

1. General Setting: Pillsbury "A" Mill complex is located on Southeast Main Street on the east bank of the Mississippi River at St. Anthony Falls. The tile elevator occupies Lot 18 of Block 50 on the site approximately at the prior location of vacated Fourth Avenue at the west edge of the property on Main Street.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Original Architectural Drawings: Original architectural drawings for the Tile Elevator are on file at The Pillsbury Company, Pillsbury Center, 200 South Sixth Street, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402.

B. Early Views: Historic photographic views are available from the Minnesota Historical Society Audio Visual Library and from the Richard L. Ferrell Private Collection.

C. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Hennepin County Deed Books and Probate Records - Hennepin County Government Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota

History of Pillsbury "A" Mill Complex - Minneapolis, Minnesota Chronology by Richard L. Ferrill, June 1979, Revised May 1987 unpublished

Office files of Architect Foster Dunwiddie - 3601 Minnesota Drive, Bloomington, Minnesota (Building Permits)

2. Secondary published sources:

Pillsbury's Best - A Company History from 1869, William J. Powell, Minneapolis, The Pillsbury Company, 1985

Sanborn Insurance Maps, St. Paul, Minnesota Historic Society, Map Collection

Pillsbury People, 75th Anniversary Diamond Jubilee Edition 1869-1944

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June 1987

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was prepared as a class project for Architecture 5143, Historic Building Research and Documentation, a class offered in the School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture at the University of Minnesota. The class project was prepared under the direction of Professor Foster W. Dunwiddie in cooperation with the State Historic Preservation Office of the Minnesota Historical Society, Saint Paul, Minnesota. Historical data was compiled by Julie Maple and Rita Goodrich, University of Minnesota, June 1987.